



Thornaby-on-Tees  
TOWN COUNCIL.

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Medical Officer's  
Annual Report,

For the Year ended 31st December, 1896.

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Thornaby-on-Tees :  
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BOROUGH OF THORNABY-ON-TEES

# Medical Officer's Annual Report

*For the Year ended 31st December, 1896.*

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GENTLEMEN,

In the year 1896, 556 births were registered in the Borough, equivalent to a birth-rate of 34·75 per thousand of the population estimated at 16,000. Of these births, 279 were males, and 277 females. In the same period, 255 deaths were recorded, or a death-rate for the year of 15·9375 per thousand. Of these deaths, 125 were males, and 130 females. The natural increase to the population by excess of births over deaths was, therefore, 301 for the year. At the same ratio of increase in the future by excess of births over deaths it would take 53·1 years to double its present estimated population, whereas the natural increase in 1895 would have taken 64·5 years, in 1894, 59·4 years, in 1893, 43·8 years, and in 1892, 45·4 years. These figures show that, though not the highest year of increase in the quinquennial period, the year 1896 is not the lowest.

Of those who died in 1896, 89 were under one year of age, 59 between one and five years, 6 between five and fifteen, 12 between fifteen and twenty-five, 66 between twenty-five and sixty-five, and 23 were sixty-five and upwards. Under one year of age the death-rate was 5·5625; between one and five years 3·6875; under five years, 9·25; and above five years, 6·6875 per 1000 of the estimated population. Compared with similar age-periods in 1895, the death-rate under one year of age was ·3750 lower: between one and five years, it was ·4375 lower; under five years, it was ·8125 lower; and above five years, it was ·8750 per thousand lower. In other words, the total death-rate in 1896 was 1·6875 per thousand lower than in 1895.

The causes of mortality in 1896 were recorded as follows:—measles 25, enteric fever 6, croup 4, diarrhœa 4, diphtheria 3, whooping-cough 3, scarlet fever 1, cerebral diseases including convulsions 41, bronchitis and pneumonia 51, phthisis 26, heart disease 12, debility and wasting 21, premature birth 15, and all other causes 43—total 255.

Taking the first seven causes as zymotic in character, there were 46 deaths, or a zymotic death-rate of 2·875 per 1000 of the estimated population, while there were 209 from other causes, or an ordinary death rate of 13·0625 per 1000.

During the year 1896, 172 cases of infectious disease were notified in the borough, of which 109 were scarlet fever, 38 enteric fever, 11 diphtheria, 5 continued fever, 5 erysipelas, and 4 croup. As com-

pared with the number of notifications in 1895, this makes the total 26 less in 1896—21 less of scarlet fever, 6 less of enteric fever, 5 less of erysipelas, one more of continued fever, and 5 more of diphtheria, while croup was the same in number in both years.

In point of mortality, the chief epidemic of 1896 has been measles. In March I reported an outbreak of measles of a mild type. In September, measles of a severer type broke out, and probably several hundreds of cases occurred, with 25 deaths up to the last month of the year, when it practically ceased. The disease was so rapidly spread throughout the town, that it was deemed hopeless to close the schools, though scholars from known infected families were not re-admitted till at least a fortnight from the date of the last case in the house. Sunday school attendance, also on my advice, was discouraged: though how far this was carried out I am not able to state. The death-rate from measles was 1·5625 per thousand of the estimated population.

Of 38 cases of enteric fever, 26 were notified in the first half of the year, and 12 in the second half, with a mortality of 6, or 15·7 per cent. This compares favourably with 1895, when there were 44 cases in all with a mortality of 9, or 20·4 per cent. In all cases of enteric and continued fevers, pans for the reception and disinfection of the excreta, are provided and removed on alternate days. The contents are buried, for want of a better method, viz., cremation.

Of 109 cases of scarlet fever, 61 were notified in the first half of 1896, and 48 in the second half, with a mortality of one, or ·0625 per 1000 of the estimated population, or ·9 per cent, of the total cases. Of 130 cases in 1895, 70 occurred in the first half, and 60 in the second half, with a mortality of 6, or ·375 per 1000 of the population, or 4·6 per cent. of the total cases notified. Of 222 cases in 1894, 55 were in the former half, and 167 in the latter half, with a mortality of 7, or 3·1 per cent. of the whole number. It therefore appears that in the year 1896, this fever was less virulent in type, and less extensive in prevalence, than in the years 1894 and 1895.

Of 11 cases of diphtheria notified, 3 died, or 27·2 per cent.. In two of the cases sanitary defects were discovered and rectified in the ventilation of the soil-pipe and house drains.

The mortality from cerebral diseases including convulsions was 41 in 1896, as against 33 in 1895, 40 in 1894, 52 in 1893, and 51 in 1892.

The mortality from bronchitis and pneumonia was 51 in 1896, as against 65 in 1895, 62 in 1894, 62 in 1893, and 47 in 1892.

The mortality from phthisis was 26 in 1896, as against 24 in 1895, 27 in 1894, 20 in 1893, and 13 in 1892.

The mortality from heart disease was 12 in 1896, as against 17 in 1895, 16 in 1894, 10 in 1893, and 12 in 1892.

The mortality from debility and wasting was 21 in 1896, as

against 19 in 1895, 21 in 1894, 33 in 1893, and 31 in 1892.

The number of inquests in the borough in 1896 was 15, as against 8 in 1895, 14 in 1894, 8 in 1893, and 12 in 1892. Of these 15 inquests, 3 were returned as due to natural causes, such as convulsions or heart disease, 4 to drowning in the River Tees, 4 to injuries from accidents, 3 to accidental suffocation in bed or by being overlaid, and 1 to suicidal cut-throat during temporary insanity.

Only three deaths were returned in 1896 as "not certified."

During the year regular inspections have been made jointly and separately, by myself and your Sanitary Inspector, Mr. C. T. Johnson, and action taken where required, as appears from the following list of sanitary work carried out :--

Drains relaid, cleaned and repaired	...	...	...	26
Keeping of fowls discontinued	...	...	...	12
Yard walls and floors repaired	...	...	...	12
Insanitary cellar floor repaired	...	...	..	1
Ashpits and privies repaired	...	...	...	17
Deposited nuisances removed	...	...	...	3
Woollen buildings removed	...	...	...	15
New grates to sinks in sculleries and yards	...	...	...	8
Defective downcomers renewed	...	...	...	2
Defective water closets remedied	...	...	...	2
Defective urinals remedied	...	...	...	2
Filthy pigsty cleansed	...	...	...	1
Houses fumigated	...	...	...	106
Ashpits specially emptied	...	...	...	173
Sanitary pans sent and emptied on alternate days				
(Enteric fever cases)	..	...	...	38
Smoke nuisances remedied	...	...	...	1
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				419

From time to time the Registered Slaughter-houses and Milk Shops have been inspected during the year, and found, for the most part, kept clean and satisfactorily.

Under the Sale of Food and Drugs Act, 20 samples have been taken for analysis. Of 11 samples of milk, nine were found to be genuine, and two of abnormal standard. The delinquent vendors were mulcted in costs and fines. Of two samples of butter taken, one was genuine and the other adulterated. The latter led to the vendor being also fined with costs. Of six samples of water taken from the wells in Thornaby village known to be used for personal consumption, none were found to be genuinely free from surface or other impurities. The wells were closed until they had been thoroughly cleaned out from the bottom. The ultimate outcome of the discovery of the nature of the water in the wells of Thornaby village has been that the Thornaby Town Council have agreed with the Stockton and Middlesbrough



Water Board to lay their water mains up to the village, and when this is done, the whole of the Borough will be in possession of the same water supply. Gas mains will also be laid up to the village.

In my report for the month of July, I felt it my duty to certify the Tees Bone Mill Company to be creating a nuisance in need of abatement, and summary proceedings were ordered to be taken with that view. After repeated interviews improvements were effected in the process of bone-boiling in another and higher part of the premises, and by better arrangements for the removal of the offensive effluvia, so that the case was ultimately withdrawn as the cause of action had been rectified. In October another company notified their intention of setting up Bone-crushing machinery, dealing with bones under steam pressure "without any offensive smell." As this was looked upon as the establishment of a new bone-boiling business, a resolution was carried that the Town Council "will not permit any new business of Bone-boiling to be established within the Borough." There the matter at present rests.

As recreation may justly be held to be no small part of the means of retaining sound health amongst a community, it is pleasant to record the successful adoption by the Town Council in March of the powers given by the Allotments Act of 1887, and the presentation by Alderman Joseph Richardson of about four acres of land as a playground in perpetuity for the young people of Thornaby. Already, in autumn, the holders of Corporation allotments have had a good show of garden produce, in which keen competition for the prizes offered took place. Friendly rivalry has been evoked, and many of the tillers of the soil and their wives and families have spent every spare hour in their gardens, doubtless, to the benefit of their health and the increase of their creature comforts.

Reviewing the year 1896 as a whole, the Borough of Thornaby-on-Tees has not belied its motto-" Always advancing." With improvements made in drainage and sewer ventilation, in street-making and paving, with systematic, punctual, and efficiently-inspected scavenging, with the adoption of building and street-making bye-laws of an improved up-to-date character, and with the increasing construction of better-class cottage property, in spite of the want of a Borough Infectious Hospital, or of a Public Abattoir, formerly and now recommended, the comparatively low death-rate is proof that the general sanitation of the town is not radically bad.

I am, yours faithfully,

THOMAS WATSON, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health, Thornaby-on-Tees.

*2nd February, 1897.*